

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claims 1-2 (Canceled).

Claim 3 (Previously Presented): A screening method comprising the steps of:  
cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;  
combining plural of said hexagonal cells into one combined single halftone cell;  
setting threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone; and  
wherein in said setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claims 4-6 (Canceled).

Claim 7 (Previously Presented): A screening method comprising the steps of:  
cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;  
combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell;  
setting respective different threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone; and  
wherein in the setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 8 (Canceled).

Claim 9 (Previously Presented): A screening method comprising the steps of:  
cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;  
combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell; and  
dividing an interior of each of said respective hexagonal cells to form respective sub-matrices.

Claim 10 (Original): A screening method as defined in claim 9,  
wherein in said dividing step each sub-matrix is employed for an auxiliary dot.

Claim 11 (Original): A screening method as defined in claim 9,  
wherein said sub-matrices in said hexagonal cells are not all of a same shape.

Claim 12 (Original): A screening method as defined in claim 10,  
wherein said sub-matrices in said hexagonal cells are not all of a same shape.

Claims 13-14 (Canceled).

Claim 15 (Previously Presented): A screening apparatus comprising:  
hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;  
halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell; and

threshold value setting means for setting threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone; and

wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claims 16-18 (Canceled).

Claim 19 (Previously Presented): A screening apparatus comprising:

hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell; and

threshold values setting means for setting respective different threshold values to the respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone; and

wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 20 (Canceled).

Claim 21 (Previously Presented): A screening apparatus comprising:

hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell; and

sub-matrix forming means for dividing an interior of each of said respective hexagonal cells to form sub-matrices.

Claim 22 (Original): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 21, wherein each sub-matrix is employed for an auxiliary dot.

Claim 23 (Original): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 21, wherein said sub-matrices in said hexagonal cells are not all of a same shape.

Claim 24 (Original): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 22, wherein said sub-matrices in said hexagonal cells are not all of a same shape.

Claims 25-26 (Canceled).

Claim 27 (Previously Presented): A screening method comprising the steps of:  
cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

combining plural of said hexagonal cells into one combined single halftone cell;  
setting threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone;

combining plural single halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and

wherein respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells are not aligned in either horizontal or vertical directions.

Claim 28 (Previously Presented): A screening method as defined in claim 27,  
wherein in said setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural  
hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 29 (Previously Presented): A screening method comprising the steps of:  
cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-  
regular hexagonal cells;  
combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell;  
setting respective different threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone  
cell to express a halftone;  
combining plural single halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps  
therebetween; and  
wherein respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells are  
not aligned in either horizontal or vertical directions.

Claim 30 (Previously Presented): A screening method as defined in claim 29,  
wherein in the setting step the set threshold values for each of said respective plural  
hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 31 (Previously Presented): A screening apparatus comprising:  
hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square  
cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;  
halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a  
combined single halftone cell;

threshold value setting means for setting threshold values for respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone;

means for combining plural of said halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and

wherein respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells are not aligned in either horizontal or vertical directions.

Claim 32 (Previously Presented): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 31, wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.

Claim 33 (Previously Presented): A screening apparatus comprising:

hexagonal cell forming means for cutting off two corners facing each other of square cells on a square grid to form non-regular hexagonal cells;

halftone cell forming means for combining plural of said hexagonal cells into a combined single halftone cell;

threshold values setting means for setting respective different threshold values to the respective grids of said single halftone cell to express a halftone;

means for combining plural of said halftone cells arranged on said square grid without any gaps therebetween; and

wherein respective threshold value setting start pixels in adjacent halftone cells are not aligned in either horizontal or vertical directions.

Claim 34 (Previously Presented): A screening apparatus as defined in claim 33,  
wherein in the threshold value setting means the set threshold values for each of said  
respective plural hexagonal cells constructing said single halftone cell are not the same.